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IMII, U of S and Sask Polytech research safety in the minerals industry

SASKATOON, SK – International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII), University of Saskatchewan (U of S) and Saskatchewan Polytechnic (Sask Polytech) are partnering on research to make Saskatchewan’s minerals industry a world leader in safety.

Representatives of the three organizations have signed an agreement to collaborate over the next two years on research into how to enhance safety cultures and employee safety behaviours in the minerals industry. Funding of almost \$786,000 comes from IMII, six major mining companies—Agrium, BHP Billiton, Cameco, K+S Potash Canada, Mosaic and Potash Corp—and the Saskatchewan government.

Co-led by U of S psychology professor Valery Chirkov and Sask Polytech Institute for Nursing Scholarship coordinator Lyle Grant, the research team will collaborate with the six mining companies to review and examine various safety programs, practices, attitudes and cultures, with a view to jointly identify with industry the next steps in advancing safety and safety behaviours. The study supports enhancing cultures of safety, education and training in minerals industry communities and their workforces.

The outcomes of this project will be improved mineral industry safety practices and an enhanced Saskatchewan safety culture, thus saving limbs and lives and significantly reducing the industry’s workplace accident costs and increasing its global competitiveness. This will ultimately attract more skilled people to join the province’s world-class minerals industry work force.

“IMII is an industry–government–education and research institutions partnership, providing leadership to inform, facilitate, coordinate, and financially support industry-driven skills and research capacity that will enhance the growth and global competitiveness of Saskatchewan’s minerals industry through collaboration,” says Engin Özberk, Executive Director & Senior Technical Advisor at IMII. “What we are celebrating today is one of the early accomplishments of this collaborative effort.”

“Our Government recognizes the important contributions the mining industry makes to Saskatchewan’s overall growth,” said Don Morgan, Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. “That’s why we support several initiatives by IMII, including this important project to improve safety in the mining industry.”

“This partnership draws on our strength in applied research, and it's a natural extension of our close relationship with employers,” says Anne Neufeld, Sask Polytech's provost and vice-

president, academic. "It's an excellent example of educational institutions and industry coming together to create a better and safer work place for Saskatchewan employees."

"This unique research partnership will shed light on the important question of how mine workers, often from diverse backgrounds, think about safety, knowledge that will lead to improved safety outcomes for workers while providing invaluable research experience to graduate and undergraduate students," says Karen Chad, U of S vice-president research.

About International Minerals Innovation Institute:

International Minerals Innovation Institute, a unique industry–government–post-secondary education and research institutions partnership jointly funded by industry and government, is a catalyst to developing industry-driven education and training programs to address labour force needs in the sector and conducts industry-driven research and development to address workplace health and safety, environmental sustainability, social license, policy research, exploration, mining, processing and economics of commodities to ensure the continued growth of the industry.

IMII's current activities and future plans are being driven by industry priorities. Through the Board of Directors and separate panels for both education and training and research and development, collaboration occurs amongst industry, government and education and research institutions to clearly define the need, solution, implementation plan and outcomes together.

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